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ABSTRACT

Four intermediate district models presented at a Massachusetts conference on organization and collaboration suggest a way that many otherwise unavailable services can be provided to local districts. These services range from programs in special and vocational education to computer networks and administrative services. Known by a variety of titles, intermediate districts are increasing in number throughout the United States. The models, from New York State, Kentucky, California, and Oregon, presented here suggest that regional educational service agencies contribute to the quantity and quality of education services available to students. (DW)

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SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND COLLABORATION FOR EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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New England School Development Council
55 Chapel Street
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SCHOOL DISTRICT
ORGANIZATION AND COLLABORATION
FOR
EQUALIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

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Robert Nolan Myers is Director of the Division of Process Evaluation, Browne Education Center, Louisville, Kentucky; has pooled interests in philosophy, theology, and psychology into an expertise in the fields of Human Relations, Leadership Training, Conflict Management, and Group Process Skills.

L. K. Stanhope is Superintendent, Umatilla County Intermediate Education District, Pendleton, Oregon; former County School Superintendent; member, Task Force for Educational Data Processing in Oregon; and member, Advisory Board for Oregon Total Information System (OTIS).

Stan Ross is Superintendent, North Orange County Regional Occupation Program, Anaheim, California; has developed, with North American Rockwell Space Division, a "model" program of cooperation between schools and industry which was selected as one of the 15 best in the United States by the U.S. Office of Education; author; consultant.

The sponsoring agents of this conference on Organization and Collaboration brought to the conference four models of middle-management input which they feel need to be developed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. From New York State, Kentucky, California, and Oregon came representatives of intermediate efforts to serve the local school system or district. This intermediate unit, as it is sometimes called, is a collaborative effort on the part of both the state department of education and local school systems or districts to form a middle echelon service agent to bring needed educational services to local schools in a manner that the local schools could not afford to do alone and the state organization is too top heavy to do from above. This middle echelon educational service center exists at the behest of the local school systems or districts and, in most cases, is funded both by the local member schools and the state Department of Education, and sometimes, from federal granting. Although some 30 states operate a three echelon system—the State Department of Education, an intermediate educational district, and the local school system or district—Massachusetts is still within the ranks of some 19 states that operate a two echelon system—at the state level and at the local level—but it is ahead of the lone state that operates a one echelon school system, Hawaii.

These intermediate units are known by a variety of titles in the states where they exist. Some states call them County Office of Education or County School System; while others, like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Washington call them Intermediate Units. In Texas they are called Education Services Centers; in Iowa, Joint County School Systems; in Nebraska,

Educational Service Units. In the State of New York, which has had a middle echelon school district system for some 25 years, the intermediate units are called Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

In some states these middle echelon school districts are legislatively mandated, as in Georgia, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. In other states, like Colorado, Iowa, New York, Michigan, and West Virginia, there is enabling legislation permitting the formation of these regional educational service agencies. In four states, California, Illinois, Ohio, and Oregon, meaningful action has been taken in recent years to improve the service role of the existing statewide network of county school systems. Nine additional states have recently enacted enabling legislation permitting the establishment of what are called multi-educational cooperatives, which function as middle echelon or regional educational service agencies (RESA). These states are Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Connecticut. In states like Massachusetts, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Idaho, Kansas, and Oklahoma, there are serious discussions on the formation of the regional educational service agency; hence, the reason for this conference on educational organization and collaboration in Massachusetts. This conference was, in reality, part of that serious discussion ongoing at the state agency level.

Clearly, the development of the regional educational service agency at the intermediate level of state organization is nationally on the upswing. A primary reason for this national development of the middle echelon form of educational service has been the financial crunch felt at the local school system level. The single school system at the local community level simply cannot afford the sophisticated kinds of educational service that is available to a larger educational collaborative of contributing school systems. This is especially true in all states which have, as does Massachusetts, school systems the size of Nantucket, Nahant, or Auburn, with little tax base other than the residential property tax. If the educational service exists and could be of help to the local school system to

forward its educational goals and objectives, some reorganization of local systems needs to be made that can afford such valuable services as are performed and offered by the regional educational service agency.

Services being offered and performed by regional educational service agencies now in operation include:

a. comprehensive programs for special education
b. comprehensive programs for vocational education
c. educational communications or media centers
d. curriculum subject matter specialists
e. data processing-computer services
f. staff development and in-service education programs, including curriculum development

A greater sophistication in the metropolitan areas occurs in the following:

1. diagnostic and pre-scriptive centers
2. vocational-technical planning
3. planning, research, and development

In the foreseeable future regional educational service agencies will be able to offer such services as:

a. administrative and management services
b. in-service and staff development services
c. health and drug education coordination
d. itinerant, specialized teacher services
e. pupil personnel programs
f. interagency coordination
g. migrant and adult education

Regional educational service agencies contribute enormously to the quantity and the quality of educational services available to the youngsters attending school in a community school district or system. This contributes to the laudable, but all too often, unachievable goal of a quality education for every youngster in the country no matter where he may live.

Dr. Richard TenHaken, whose keynote address to the conference has been summarized in the preceding pages, is, himself, a District Superintendent of Schools in Spencerport, New York and very much involved in one of the 46 Boards of Cooperative Educational Services that presently exist and function in the state. As a panelist, he also conducted one of the four separate sessions on regional educational service agency models in the country. He pointed out that while enabling legislation had been passed in the State of New York, no school district in the state was compelled to join or participate in the formation of a BOCES. But, despite the fact that membership in a BOCES was voluntary, all but 17 of the state's 731 eligible school districts are now members.

After they have been established by the Commissioner of Education, BOCES are governed by a five- to nine-member board. Each member school district has the same number of votes so that every school district, regardless of size, has an equal share in representative membership on the BOCES. This governing board has the authority to appoint its chief administrative officer, the district superintendent, subject to the approval of the State Commissioner of Education. Each BOCES has a maximum of 20 school districts, and the State Department of Education prefers that each BOCES have a travel time of no more than two hours from boundary to boundary. A minimum of 20,000 students is represented by each BOCES, while the average size is about 40,000.

Each local school district is assessed a pro rata amount to cover the administrative cost of its BOCES. Some money comes from the state and other financial support comes from

federal projects and the service contracting done with the local school districts in the BOCES.

Virtually every type of service identified with Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) is provided somewhere in New York State by a BOCES. The following are some of the services supplied local districts by New York BOCES:

1. vocational-technical education
2. computer services (administrative, instructional, and instructional support)
3. programs and services for exceptional children (e.g., diagnostic - prescriptive centers; gifted; speech-hearing correction; physically and mentally handicapped services)
4. subject-matter specialists
5. research, planning, and evaluation
6. administrative and management programs and services (including legal and financial services, cooperative purchasing, and negotiations)
7. in-service and staff development programs
8. health and drug education coordination
9. administrative functions for the State Education Agency
10. itinerant, specialized teacher services
11. pupil personnel programs
12. interagency coordination
13. migrant and adult education

In short, New York's 46 BOCES function in a *change agent role* by helping local school districts keep abreast of the newest developments in the field. They also serve a *planning and coordination role* by avoiding costly duplication of effort from one local school district to another. They also serve a *field service role* if a member school system needs the services of a consultant. Clearly, the New York network of regional BOCES has proved to be a worthwhile contribution to quality and contemporary education in the local school district.

Mr. L. Kenneth Stanhope, of Pendleton, Oregon, is the Superintendent of the Umatila Intermediate Education District, which is one of 29 such regional educational service agencies presently operating in the State of Oregon. Intermediate Education Districts (IED) have been in operation in Oregon since 1963, when they were organized to serve as intermediate units between the State Department of Education at Portland and the local school system or district.

These 29 intermediate educational districts in Oregon serve local school districts which vary in size from Flora, a school district with but seven children, to Portland, which has 70,000. The services provided by IED cover essentially those services listed by Dr. Ten Haken in his keynote address to the conference, but they are distinct in two particular services which are especially adapted to the State's more than 960,000 square miles of territory. One service is coded OTIS (Oregon Total Information System) and is a statewide computer system based at Eugene, Oregon, which was established in 1968 with ESEA funds.

OTIS, with a complex network of telephone lines at the local school district level, and terminals at the IED level, offers both the IED and the local school district a wide variety of services under the general headings of *student, staff, curriculum, property*, and *fiscal*. The overall value of OTIS to its member school districts is in its pooling of local resources and in its data bank storage and retrieval capacity. It performs services that the local school district, and in some cases even the IED, could not afford to perform for itself. At a cost of $7.00 per student, per year, the local school district

has an information system at its fingertips. There is a turn-around time of some two and one-half seconds from the time the request for information is telephoned into OTIS and the time the information gets back to the local school. This is faster than any local filing system and is infinitely more efficient and reliable, yet less costly in terms of both time and money.

OTIS, using a system called GEMS (General Educational Management Systems), handles such diverse services as enrollment, attendance, scheduling, grade reporting, test scoring, payroll, accounts payable, encumbrances. All information, stored for each local district, is standardized, but coded, so that only the local school district has access to its own information.

The second service provided at the local IED level is IED-TV which serves the intermediate district as a curricular supplement at the local school district level. It has the capacity to produce local closed circuit programming and to screen statewide and national programming into the local school district classroom. This is another service vital to any modern instructional operation whose cost would be prohibitive at the local school district level, but can be easily handled at the IED level.

The Intermediate Educational District in the State of Oregon, has broad statutory authroity under Chapter 334 of the Oregon Laws. It not only provides vital modern services to the local school district, but also serves as a leavening agent at the local school district level.

Mr. Stan Ross is the reluctant Superintendent of the North Orange County Regional Occupational Program at Anaheim, California. He is reluctant in that he did not have administrative ambitions when he first started teaching, but he soon felt that what he was being asked to do in his classroom was not the best way to educate kids. He sought to find a better, more sensible way and soon found that the only way was to exert this kind of pressure for change from the top. So now he's a superintendent because that's the level where you can get things done, but he's still a teacher because he operates a program that has a direct influence on kids.

Stan Ross runs a specialized regional educational service agency at the intermediate unit level that serves four school districts. It includes 168 elementary schools and more than 45,000 high school students. Essentially, Mr. Ross's program is a large work/study operation that supplements the normal high school curriculum with specific occupational experiences. The program has a six-member board, two members from each of the two large districts, and one member from each of the two small districts in the region. The board meets four times annually to set policy for a program that is only two years old but has, in that short time, risen from an operation with 250 students to nearly 8,000.

Mr. Ross's program has a total capital investment of $230,000, a small central office, and a network of outposts in the local business community that covers the entire county. His students volunteer for the program and are able to use it for their own benefit. They can take as many or as few courses as they please and come in or drop out as they please. The cost to the students' home school district is $1.25 per student hour. Classes are usually conducted in the local occu-

pational site, are two hours long, and run year round if there is student demand and/or community need. A student may sign up for a course, stay as long as he needs to acquire the skill being taught, then drop out in favor of another course in an advanced phase of the newly acquired skill or another skill altogether. Classes are two to four hours in length and are conducted after the regular four- to six-hour school schedule.

The program runs on an open enrollment basis, with no fees, no tests, no counseling, no textbooks—all that is needed is the student's name, address and telephone number. Classes are informal and are usually organized with a mixture of veteran and neophyte students so that they will help and orient one another. Virtually all the classes are held on site and are taught by a tradesman/teacher who has at least seven years experience in his trade. Students do not get paid for the work they do until they are actually hired as full-time employees. According to Stan Ross, new people on the job are a "drag," and being paid for learning the job makes them even a greater "drag." Students are there to learn. If they perform some useful work in the process, that's all to the good, but the time and money involved in on-the-job training still means that the work is unprofitable, at best, for the cooperating firm. The program makes an agreement with each cooperating business that there will be no cut in payroll, and no reduction in employees as a result of the student help.

The program teaches an inverted curriculum in that most courses teach the theory first and then, if at all, the application of the theory in practice. But Ross and his staff believe that the inverse makes more sense—so they begin with practice, "getting their hands dirty as soon as possible." Then, when they see the need for the theory and begin to ask questions, "we sock it to 'em," says Stan Ross. The program is still struggling to keep within its budget and for that reason most of the 8,000 participants get to their on-site classes on their own. Lately, the program has supplied four buses, but only because the program has expanded so fast and the sites are so far apart.

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Job placement is the responsibility of the teaching staff who, because they are so familiar with the work they are teaching, are much more familiar with job opportunities and job "connections" than counselors would be. Some problems do arise on occasion, such as when there is a need for jobs but no student interest, or when there is high student interest but no jobs. But these rather isolated cases are handled individually.

At present, classes and courses are offered in the following employment areas:

MANUFACTURING

Auto Body Repair	Masonry
Construction	Ornamental Iron
Graphic Arts	Plastics
Machine Shop	Welding
Manufacturing	Wood Manufacturing

SERVICING (People)

Animal Care	Hotel/Motel
Cosmetology	Law Enforcement
Education Occupations	Medical
Fire Safety	Recreation
Food Services	Retail Trades

SERVICING (Products)

Auto Mechanics	Building Maintenance
Auto Services	Electricity/Electronics
Auto Service Station	Landscaping
Motor Cycle Repair	Nursery & Greenhouse

SERVICING (Data)

Data Processing	Office Occupations

Classes are held in retail stores, in grocery stores, in hospitals, child care centers, nurseries, auto body shops, gas stations, the Anaheim Police Department, Quality and Hilton Inns, Local No. 22 Bricklayers Union, and the Gladys Morgan Beauty College. At Rockwell International there are 18 classes of 8 to 25 students each which are taught in-plant by volunteer company employees two evenings per week. At Sears the students actually run a food services program which serves

lunch and dinner to Sears' employees and school personnel.

Clearly, the idea has caught on at Anaheim, not only with the students, but with the public and the business community which has so generously responded to what was a clear need in North Orange County, California.

The Louisville Story is part of a massive collaborative effort to upgrade and remodel educational instruction in key inner-city schools that were clearly in trouble. In 1970, the Louisville schools had the dubious distinction of having the second highest dropout rate in the country—Philadelphia was number one. Some 1,865 students had dropped out of schools, and 71% of Louisville students were below national norms on achievement tests. The average Louisville eighth grader finished the 1969-1970 school year reading at a grade level of 6.3 which was two grades below the national average. The Louisville Board of Education realized something had to be done quickly to correct this appalling situation.

In 1969, Louisville hired Newman Walker as Superintendent of Schools and gave him a mandate to alleviate the situation. It was understood that he would have a free hand in instituting the changes he felt were needed in the ailing school system. Walker began to examine the problems and found himself in charge of a school system of some 50,000 youngsters, almost fifty-fifty black and white, 34% of whom came from families with an annual income of $2,000, or less. He also found that the Louisville Public Schools were unusually free from political pressure, teachers were not heavily unionized or anti-administration, and blacks and whites were not particularly antagonistic towards one another in the city.

Dr. Walker felt that small projects prove meaningless in their effect on the system as a whole, so he decided to go for massive change and got the Board to back him up. He imme-

diately placed Dr. Frank Yeager in charge of the day-to-day operation of the schools. He also had a telephone installed in his car and made that his office-on-the-go to visit schools, talk to parent groups, hold long discussions with his teachers, and generally make himself maximally visible to his entire educational constituency.

At the beginning of the 1970-71 academic year, Walker began to prepare for change by having all 275 central office administrators and board members attend one of a series of five-day retreats planned to get people together, know one another better, and to introduce some principles of conflict management. Some reacted negatively to this idea and decided to retire or simply move on. Walker and Yeager then set about to concentrate some Federal grant money on their project which involved 14 inner-city schools in what were called Project Focus and Project Impact. Walker went to Washington and managed to get several Federal granting agencies to pool resources in a collaborative effort to fund some two million dollars for these Focus and Impact schools and communities.

Six Project Focus schools had been selected and organized into teams of eight people each: a coordinating teacher, a regular teacher, four Teacher Corps interns, and two paraprofessionals. Each team worked with a "family" grouping of some 100 to 200 youngsters which provided a student-adult ratio of about 18:1. Planning time was worked into the flexible scheduling of the Focus schools and each school was governed by a neighborhood-based "mini-board" composed of parents, teachers, and pupils.

Project Impact was similarly organized in one senior high school, four junior high schools, and three elementary schools. In this project, the team was composed of three teachers and three paraprofessionals who worked with a "family" of about 125 youngsters, making a student-adult ratio of 20:1. Impact schools had the same scheduling and the same instructional program as Focus schools, but the Impact schools placed major emphasis on the center-of-interest curriculum which concentrated on social issues, inter-personal developmental skills, and career opportunities.

In all 14 schools of Projects Focus and Impact, the teachers, clerks, and principals were given the opportunity to transfer to other schools, and their places to be filled by volunteers from throughout the city. Having new people in these schools, who were convinced of the need for change and of the possibility that Walker's plans in Projects Focus and Impact could fill that need, made the going a little easier in the rough beginnings of the two projects.

A series of workshops was held the summer before the projects were to go into operation. Involved were 414 certified personnel, 270 paraprofessionals, and more than 100 Teacher Corps interns. The workshops were primarily aimed at preparing the staff for the changes that would occur when school opened in a few weeks. Concentrating on the verbal aspects of human behavior, the workshops were the instructional equivalents of the series of administrative "retreats" that had been held earlier in the year. The teachers, aides, and Teacher Corps interns all thought the workshops were great, but things were different when the kids arrived in September. The problems were there, but the determination to evoke significant change in the way kids and adults treated each other eventually won the day. While the changes wrought in Louisville were less than Walker's original vision, they did occur. The changes permeated throughout the schools, throughout the entire 67 school system, and even into the suburban schools—not so much in the machinery of methodologies and organization as in the atmosphere that prevailed—more open, more humane, more communicative, and more interested in the kids as people who want to learn.

The neighborhood school boards, once called miniboards, still function in more than 50 schools, but Projects Focus and Impact have been phased out due to financial difficulties. A Diagnostic-Prescriptive-Individualized Reading Program (DPI) has been started in the inner-city schools to raise the reading level in these schools by the Spring of 1974. It has been called the most impressive inner-city reading program in the country by some observers who have viewed it first-hand. Another innovative effort is centered at the Browne School in downtown Louisville. It is one of the old

landmarks of the city and, as the Browne Hotel, once served and lodged many of the country's most notable citizens during Derby week. The school department has taken over the famous old hotel and is using it as the central administration building—the Browne Education Center—and as a "school without walls," using the immediate downtown area as its classroom with a curriculum built around pertinent social problems. The enrollment of the Browne School is racially and socio-economically mixed and is selected on a first-come, first-served basis. It has only been in operation for one year, and the crucial achievement test results have not as yet been tabulated. Therefore, the final verdict must wait.

Engaging in the business of educational change in the last few years has been an exhilerating experience for those fortunate enough to have been a part of it. The participants, especially Newman Walker, do not hesitate to acknowledge that it didn't go along as smoothly as they had expected, but one thing is clear. Walker and his methods have turned the Louisville Public Schools from a school system at the bottom of the heap to one that is steadily moving ahead and unafraid to try new ideas.

The conference was designed to bring together a group of educational leaders from Massachusetts in order for them to see how school systems could work more closely with each other. The models just described, from California, from Kentucky, from New York, and from Oregon, are examples of how the intermediate educational school district idea has taken shape in those states. At the beginning of the conference Dr. Ten Haken, in his keynote address, noted that Massachusetts was one of the states still at the discussion stage relative to the intermediate school district idea. It is still what he calls a two echelon state, but the sponsors of the conference would like Massachusetts to move in the direction of a three echelon state, using the intermediate school district idea.

The afternoon panelists informed the conference participants about what Massachusetts is doing in moving towards the goal of intermediate collaboration. Hopefully, both the morning and the afternoon sessions were stimulating enough to create interest in mutual educational collaboration among school systems in Massachusetts. Such collaborative efforts can bring enrichment to the youngsters in the local school systems in the state.